

Gamefreaks

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

PS ONE

XBOX

GAME BOY ADVANCE

GAMECUBE



ENTER THE MATRIX

ALSO INSIDE

THE SIMS SUPERSTAR

MOTO GP ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY 2

TAO FENG THE FIST OF THE LOTUS

GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY

DEF JAM VENDETTA

SHINOBI

NBA STREET VOL 2

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

GOLDEN SUN 2 THE LOST AGE

VIETCONG



BRACE YOURSELF. Your Sims Are Famous!



ROCK STAR

MOVIE STAR

The Sims
superstar
EXPANSION PACK

SUPERMODEL

CELEBRITY

M 15+

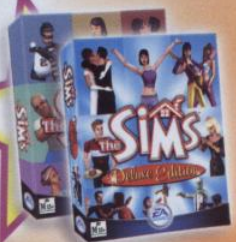
EA GAMES

Expansion Pack - Needs The Sims or The Sims Deluxe Edition to play.

M 15+
SEXUAL REFERENCES

PC
CD

Experience the lifestyles of the rich and famous in The Sims™ Superstar. Make a name for yourself as a movie star, rock star, or supermodel, and then spend your hard-earned cash on a selection of extravagant new items for your home. You can cruise around the all-new Studio Town or kick back and relax with a lavish spa treatment. Will your Sims skyrocket to fame or fade into obscurity?





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04



09

thank you

Adrian, Anne, Annie, Beanie, Ben, Chris, Dean, Debs, Deborah, Deftones, Ewan, Gina, Heath, Izzy, Jenny, Kate, Kaitlyn, Kenny, Luc, Macka, Mark, Matthew, Mike, Neal, Paul, Pip, Rachel, Robyn, Teresa, Tom, Wilf and Yunuen.



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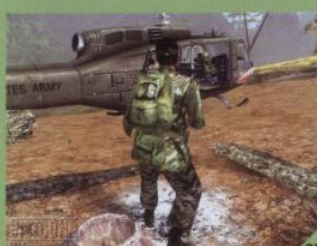
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read me

We are celebrating the arrival of Enter the Matrix. It's the game the whole world's been waiting for; deeply intertwined with the film we've been waiting for too. Go see the movie, then play the game; that's the idea and without doing both, you'll never fully unravel all the secrets of the Matrix.

Infogrames were kind enough to send over preview code (the complete PS2 version) for us to check out before any of the Aussie gaming magazines got to see it – plug yourself into page 10 to read up about this incredible new title.

As always, we have a whole swag of previews and reviews for you this month, across all the major platforms.

Reviewed for the PC this month, The Sims Superstar, Grand Theft Auto Vice City, Championship Manager 4 and Vietcong.

PlayStation 2 titles this month include Shinobi, NBA Street Vol. 2, Def Jam Vendetta and Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance and Xbox fans can check out Moto GP Ultimate Racing Technology 2, Tao Feng: The Fist of the Lotus and Burnout 2: Point of Impact.

Also we went to Eden Park to check out Rugby 2004, the upcoming footy title headed our way this side of the World Cup.

Next month – Rise of Nations, Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness, E3 coverage and a whole lot more.

THE RETURN TO MIDDLE EARTH

Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King announced for five platforms.

Electronic Arts have released details on a new game based on Peter Jackson's film *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*.

Set for worldwide, cross-platform release later this year, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* will let players journey several paths, taking control of the motion picture trilogy's heroes including Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and Hobbits Sam, and Frodo.

Details are fairly scarce so far with the game still in development, but we're hearing reports that it makes use of new lighting techniques to render the characters in a more realistic way. Once again, the developers have borrowed textures and motion data from the film's special effects team so expect the same striking visuals.

Perhaps the biggest news is the newly added multi-player option that will let you and your fellow adventurer's journey and battle the evil forces of Middle Earth cooperatively. This also gives you the chance to employ cunning teamwork, and fully exploit each individual's characteristics. The beautifully crafted 3D environments will be much larger this time around, allowing for extended and more involved levels.

Another noteworthy feature is the interactivity of the environments. Now your character will have the capability to operate machinery (firing catapults and cranking winches) as you advance in your quest.

The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King will be released on the PS2, Xbox, Gamecube, Game Boy Advanced and the PC simultaneously.

Still several months away, Gamefreaks will keep a close eye on this one and we will bring you more news as it comes in.



E3: TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORIES

Video games industry gathers in the City of Angels.

It has been nearly a decade since the first ever Electronic Entertainment Expo, more commonly known as E3, was staged in Los Angeles.

Each and every year, publishers and developers use E3 as a means to show off their latest games and hardware advancements to the retail community. Not only do they offer display booths and things of that nature but there are conferences and workshops to provide prospective buyers with fun ways to get to know the product. Over 1000 products debut at E3 each year.

Exhibitors include a wide range of categories covering everything from the big console companies through to smaller production and packaging services.

We're anticipating a lot of focus on the ongoing online revolution that is currently going on in the gaming industry. Not just for PC titles but for the consoles as well, who are understandably keen to establish online communities of their own abroad.

There is bound to be a lot of announcements coming from this year's event but we'll have more on that in coming issues when we'll bring you news on all the biggest games at E3.



The games industry has come a long way in ten years and E3 has evolved into the world's largest annual gathering of video games media, publishers, and developers. 70,000 attended the three day event in 2002 and it's not even open to the public

MIX THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT - IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.

FRENCH | KOREAN | GERMAN | AZTEC | JAPANESE | INDIAN

RISE OF NATIONS™

IN STORES 5 JUNE 2003



A REAL-TIME STRATEGY GAME FROM BRIAN REYNOLDS,
LEAD DESIGNER OF CIVILIZATION II

Microsoft
game studios

EA SHOW OFF NEW RUGBY TITLE

We visited Eden Park for a sneak preview of EA Sports' Rugby 2004.

EA Sports is well known for cranking out quality titles on a regular basis, dominating sales in the Northern Hemisphere with definitive NFL, NHL and FIFA licenses. Now with the Rugby World Cup on our doorstep, antipodean fans can play it their way with this year's release of EA Rugby 2004 for the PS2.

The release of Rugby 2001 paid off for EA Sports. Sales figures backed up the suspicion there was a market for a rugby title, selling well in the northern hemisphere and hugely popular down under. Armed with feedback from the legion of rugby mad gamers, Rugby 2004 has been rebuilt from the ground up to deliver more action and more rugby flavour.

The development team reckon they've dotted down with a winner, and from what we've seen Gamefreaks have to agree. We spent an afternoon with EA Sports Rugby 2004 Development Manager Andrew Wilson and checked out some pre-release code to get a feel for what's coming up.

"I like to think that EA Sports Rugby 2004 is three times the game our last offering Rugby 2001 was," says Andrew. "We have improved and upgraded every element in the game."

We eagerly await a look at the final release graphics, but can report that the motion capture player animations do give a better sense of the game, and the Stadiums – 75 of which have been included – look accurate and authentic, with a nice sense of detail to give things that live TV coverage look. The video replay screens play actual replays, and both the weather and ground conditions recreate those you'd find at the ground in question.

A lot of work has been done to carry that authenticity through, and playability has improved out of sight. This release is fully optimised for the PS2 and player movement is now controlled through the left analogue stick, allowing for confident sideline play and better control over direction for jinking runs and cover tackles. Shoulder buttons control passing, allowing for skip passes, cut-outs, dummies – basically the full range of options available to the modern player, including breaking tackles and big Jonah style fends.

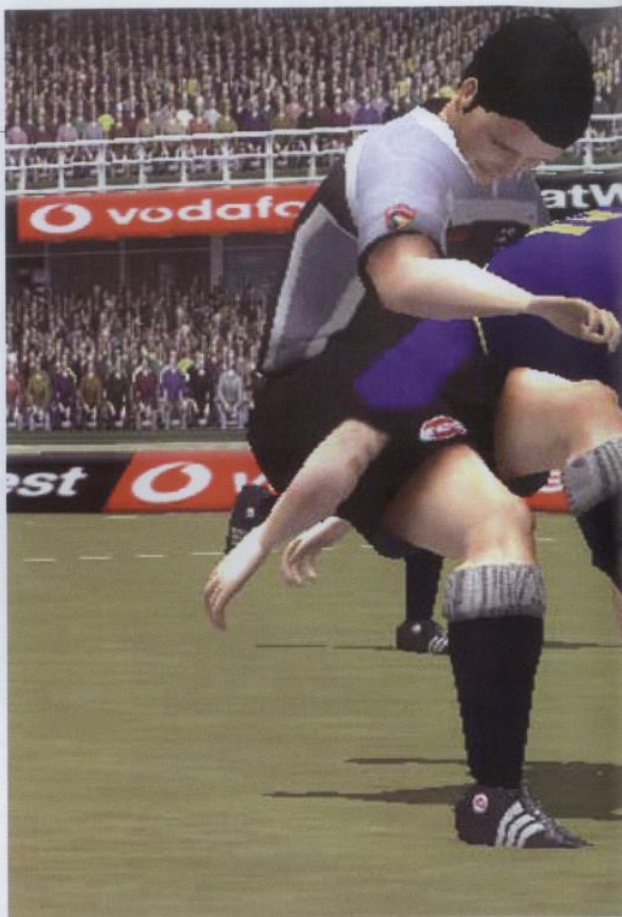
Set plays can be pre-selected like in Madden, but options can be worked on the fly using keypad control. In a lineout for example, the selection of targets and jumpers is handled through subtle timing of the keypad and D-pad to direct and time the throw. This is a vastly better system than the previous onscreen menu, which meant the opposition always knew where the ball was going, and brings a new tactical element to the game.

Rucks and mauls reflect the fast modern style. Again the keypad comes into play drawing players in or pulling them out of the ruck while the left thumbstick controls a loogie around the fringes or sets up an inside back for the line break. Digging the ball out is no longer a chore, although talented players can still get in and rip the ball away from the unwary to turn it over.

Once freed up, the ball can be turned back in or spun down the line, depending on your team's style and tactics, and it pays to play to your strengths. A good forward pack can sustain phase after phase, drawing in players and creating gaps just as in real life. Try to break the line too quickly or duff a pass and you'll end up going backwards at a rate of knots. Kicking options are also available – just make sure it's not the Hooker booting up-and-under all match long when it should be going to the skinny guy.

To make these plays work, a new system of game logic and player attributes have been slipped in under the hood. Each player carries an incredible amount of detail, and can be customised down to the hair colour – though no word yet on whether Mehrt's new sideburns will be rendered in the final release. There are over 3000 players waiting for selection and final numbers of around 1500 will be included once actual squads are confirmed just prior to release.

Core abilities and physical considerations are set by player



Enjoy this moment Ireland ... because we've already been down to the TAB and put \$10 on the Irish never scoring a try against the All Blacks. Rugby 2004 features 95 international teams



position, while form is tracked over 18 attributes covering things like speed, aggression, agility and handling. A further 14 special abilities are hard coded into the game – each player getting 3-5 of these depending on their star qualities. Resistance to injury is included, and is important in managing your team over the long term. Keep your backs out of the rucks and they'll last much longer!

Attributes and abilities combine to give each player a skill score and maintenance cost. Individual player skills go up or down, depending on performance. If they're played badly, even your stars will go downhill and be less effective. However, all players respond to effective play. Building players up by making all your lineout throws, kicking field goals, solid tackling and of course prolific try-scoring is a key strategy and essential to long term success.

In addition to the usual friendly or exhibition matches single players can work their way through licensed seasons of Super 12, Tri-Nations, Six Nations, European Cup and the World Cup, or take on everyone in the fictional World League comprising all 95 teams filled with stars, unknowns and up to 90 user created custom players.

The World League is huge, and offers a deep player manager experience. To take a team from the bottom to the top requires good skills on the ball, and a keen mind working the bench. Success on the paddock brings in Trade Points which can be used to draft in star players, bench warmers can be traded off and the skill system allows skilled coaches to build up talented players to keep or sell at a profit. The maintenance cost, tied to skill level, balances things out – a losing team simply can't afford to hang on to superstars – and makes nurturing your team a long term and satisfying pursuit.

Playable from the first whistle; a rich single player experience and supporting up to 2 vs. 2 multiplayer, Rugby 2004 looks to become the definitive winter game. Backed by the usual EA Sports polish, and capturing the power and finesse out on the field, this is the one we've all been waiting for.



Gregan clears from the ruck (top) despite an obvious French offside. (middle) Lineouts have been revamped and you can no longer see where your opponent is throwing to. (bottom) The All Blacks mumble their way through another national anthem. This could be the squad for the World Cup final - although we seem to have selected too many locks



DARK CHRONICLE

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ JUNE

Just to avoid any confusion, this title is better known in some countries as Dark Cloud 2. This long awaited PlayStation 2 RPG tells the tale of a young boy Max who is fighting to save his world from the hands of tyranny - big surprise! The game promises hours of adventure plus a combat system that allows you to target and attack specific enemies.

Of course, dungeon exploration is routine but even though the dungeons in this game are randomly generated to keep everything fresh, they all still look identical.

Following recent trends, Dark Chronicle was drawn using beautiful cel-shaded graphics but unlike Zelda, there are some world-building features, similar to the classic Populous. We'll bring more news of the highly promising Dark Chronicle closer to its release.



RESIDENT EVIL DEAD AIM

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ JUNE

Capcom's Resident Evil: Survivor series was an attempt to break away from the traditional Resident Evil storyline and gameplay mechanics, placing an emphasis on light-gun shooting instead of the traditional puzzle-solving, explorative fundamentals of the earlier games. It was a great idea but it didn't quite work.

Fresh from the drawing board, Capcom have a new shooting title, Resident Evil: Dead Aim, which despite having a new third-person view has many of the same features and mechanics as Survivor, only this time Capcom has made an effort to keep the classic feel of Resident Evil. This is not a turkey shoot, players can explore, solve puzzles and at times, you even have to avoid a fight in order to survive.



CLOCK TOWER 3

GAMECUBE ■ JUNE

Ooooo...skeeeerrrrrry! Even the name has a ghoulish quality. However here at Gamefreaks, we're not afraid. We've always been fans of survival horror (with the lights on) and by all accounts, Clock Tower 3 promises to be one of the genre highlights of the year.

The pre-rendered sequences were directed by Japanese film maker Kinji Fukasaku, adding to the game's theatrical themes and darkly atmospheric good looks. Unlike most horror-inspired titles, this game's star doesn't come packing an arsenal. She's a defenceless schoolgirl, totally reliant on your skill and wits to survive. Yes we know, we think she's doomed too.



STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

PC/XBOX ■ MAY

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic is the first RPG set in the Star Wars universe. LucasArts teamed up with RPG specialists BioWare (Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter Nights) to get this title in shape. There have been numerous delays but the developers are understandably taking this game very seriously; there are legions of very-hard-to-please Star Wars fans out there just waiting to pounce on any mistakes.

But by all accounts, Star Wars KOTOR is going to be a stunner when it arrives. It's available for PC (with online support) and will be a single-player RPG on the Xbox.

We'll be taking a much closer Wookiee at this title next month.



RISE OF NATIONS

PC ■ MAY

Brian Reynolds was the brains behind Civilization 2 and Alpha Centauri - he's enormously respected in the world of strategy gaming so we're understandably eager to see his very latest effort, Rise of Nations.

The fusion of real-time elements and turn-based tactics make this an intriguing prospect for strategy fans and from the screens we've seen so far, we're expecting Rise of Nations to be visually dramatic.

The gameplay offers not just ongoing conflict but there's also nation-building, forming alliances, juggling resources and so much more. Our review copy arrived as we were going to print so look out for the full review in June.



RESIDENT EVIL 2 & 3

CUBE ■ MAY

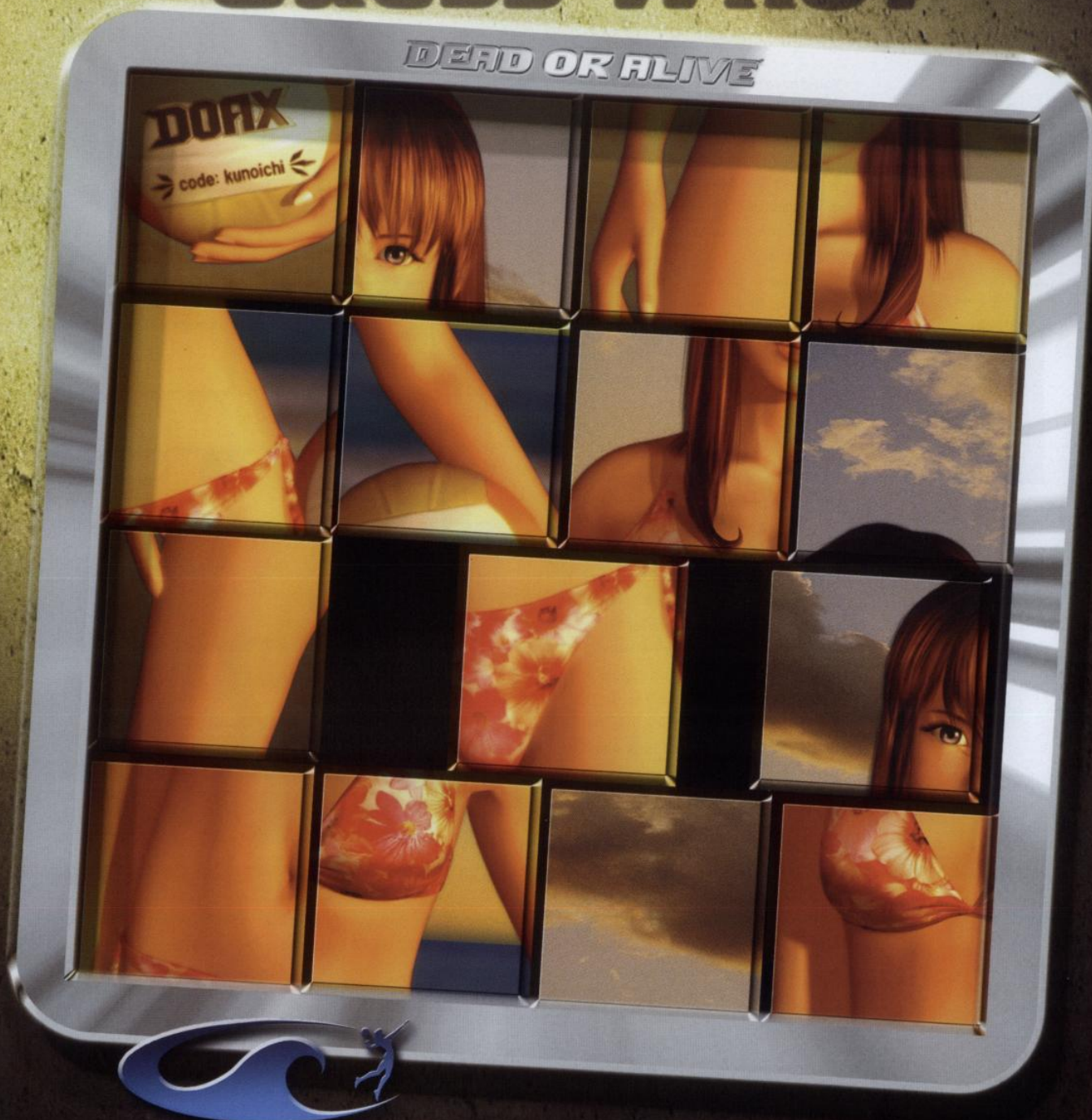
Nintendo's console is the new official home of 'Survival Horror' so Capcom have been polishing up some of the old back catalogue for Gamecube owning fright-junkies. Resident Evil 3: Nemesis and Resident Evil 2 will be direct ports of the Dreamcast versions and although they won't look as good as some of the more recent RE titles, they're still easy on the eye.

RE2 is still regarded as one of the best games of the series but it's been around; first seen on the PlayStation back in 1998, then the N64 and the PC the following year, the Dreamcast in 2000, and now the Cube.

We're hoping to get hold of both titles to review in June.

Guess Who?

DEAD OR ALIVE



DEAD OR ALIVE
XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

The girls of Dead Or Alive are back! And they've brought some new playmates.

Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball is the world's first ever sports fantasy simulation title, combining the stunning graphics and game play available only on Xbox with a host of original features.

Enjoy the cracking soundtrack of Zack Island's own radio station or rip your own favourites for play-back during the game. Add to your prize money with trips to the casino and remember to look your best on the beach.

Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball. Have up to four players as you set, dig, spike and party your way to victory. It's the most intense beach volleyball contest ever!

Did we mention the girls in bikinis? Hello boys, It's time to play!

www.xbox.co.nz



ENTER THE MATRIX

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PC\PS2\Xbox\Cube

GENRE:
3D Action

PLAYERS:
1 Player

AVAILABLE:
May 16

WEBSITE:
www.enterthematrix.com



You'd have to have been hiding under a rock to have avoided a smack in the face from the publicity surrounding the simultaneous release of the sequel to *The Matrix* and its much, much vaunted partner in crime, the first of the game spin-offs, "Enter the Matrix."

The game picks up right where the short film "The Final Flight of the Osiris" ends. For those unlucky enough not to have seen this stunning piece of computer animation, the world wasn't saved as was alluded to after the first movie and the city of Zion is under threat of discovery. The game focuses on two of the secondary characters from "The Matrix Reloaded," Niobe and Ghost, both part of the same crew as Morpheus and the gang. The plot weaves itself around that of the second movie and also runs parallel to it; you might see a character move out of a scene in the movie and appear in a mission in the game, only to finish the mission and walk back into the movie! This kind of cool interweaving really gives you a sense of being part of the movie and it is only after watching the movie trilogy, the short films AND playing the game will your knowledge be truly complete.

Over an hour of footage from "Reloaded" was filmed exclusively for the game and this feature quality full motion video blends seamlessly with rendered in-game sequences to really bring the story to life.

Much of the game is spent in the Matrix, and it is here where the action really shines. The levels are massive,



Peek-a-boo. Niobe prepares to shoot a target a young Michael Jackson lookalike. Who's bad?! Marilyn Manson (bottom left) doesn't look safe either

beautifully rendered, and the action takes place in many of the same locations as the movie. The characters too are painstakingly recreated. Even the non-player characters have personalities; the faces show fear and pain as you whip their sorry asses in real time, making smile lines look like the real deal. Hours and hours of motion capture has paid off giving a sense of speed and urgency to movements which makes watching the action a pleasure.

Action moves swiftly from exploration to combat. As soon as you move close enough to an enemy character the game switches to one-on-one fighting, allowing you to really get to work by stringing moves together into smooth and ultra-cool looking

combos that really mirror the action and style of the movies. This is where the Focus thing comes into play. Hold down the Focus button as you fight and action slows to a crawl. Empty a clip of ammo into the air and watch each and every bullet fly to its destination. Look at any one bullet and see each one has been rendered and environment-mapped, the room reflecting off its surface. This doesn't seem like a big deal, but when you take into account the fact that tens of thousands of bullets can be in the air at any one time this becomes nothing short of breath-taking. Your Focus depletes as you use it, but leave it for a little while and the meter soon fills back up; pretty soon you're disarming an enemy guard and beating him down with the butt of his own assault rifle before turning the weapon on his



A lot of care has been taken to make the animation smooth, and you can see this just by watching your character move or fight. Just don't make any dumb jokes about which colour pill you should have taken

unfortunate comrades.

There is also a driving component to the game. Depending on your character choice you will either drive or lean out of the window and shoot at the bad guys, old-school rail-shooter style. The driving is definitely geared towards an arcade experience rather than simulation, but the incredibly sweet muscle car sounds righteous and handles like a dream.

You also get to pilot the hovercraft, taking control of the turrets to shoot down the hordes of Sentinels coming from every direction.

The game has been written with a very clever graphics engine, which uses the same models and textures across all platforms, and then cunningly adjusts the level of detail for the particular capabilities of the individual platform. The PC version, for example, provided you have a grumpy beast, renders models at higher polygon counts and with much more

detailed animation while the PS2 version, despite being slightly less capable, looks just as good, as the level of detail is scaled down in areas that are considered less important. For those of us with near dinosaur PC specs, don't worry there's hope here too, as the detail scaling is superb and works extremely well.

For all this super-super-ness, there's one thing that we haven't tested yet: the game's ability to withstand the test of time. If there's anything that separates the good from the truly amazing, it's the ability to make you want to pull it off the shelf time and time again to fire it up and have a blast. But add to the replay value you get from the two different character experiences there's the feeling that you're participating in a world that has excited more people than any other fantasy world has before, and you're looking at a winner.

THE SIMS SUPERSTAR

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PC

GENRE:
Strategy

PLAYERS:
1 Player

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.ea.com/games/sims/sims_superstar/



Now you can track your rising star Sims progress with the new fame score and spend up large on mansions, satellite TV, butlers and maids, day spas, gym memberships – everything you need for the luxury lifestyle.

The Sims universe just gets bigger and better. From humble origins simulating the workaday world of the ordinary Joe and Jane we've seen hot dates, vacations and house parties, but now its going for the top. Expect glitz, glamour and really big things because here's The Sims Superstar expansion pack.

Rock star, Movie Star or Super-model, the choice is yours when you live the celebrity dream. Sign with an agent and go to Studio Town, the new customisable destination with all you need to become famous and enjoy your wealth. Television studios, movie lots and recording studios are all available along with producers, directors and stylists to coach you to success. Track progress with the new fame score and spend up large on mansions, satellite TV, butlers and maids, day spas – everything you need for the luxury lifestyle.

Hailed the best Sims yet, Superstar offers a lot. Here you actually accompany your Sim to work and have a hand in their success, making creative decisions and turning your Sim into a veritable fame machine. Aspiring singers for example, can practice on the new karaoke machines to learn from the crowd response what needs working on. When they're ready, sign on to a studio and work with a producer. If you're offering the inspiration they're looking for, make a deal and move on up. It's often difficult to mix with those above you on the social ladder, grovelling for autographs is an option, and at the other end of the scale there's adoring fans to take care of and stalkers rummaging through your garbage.

Each of the 3 new career paths follows a similar format, and you can check the tabloids to track progress. The mini-games to earn cash and fame have the hooks to keep you coming back and the system of social interactions is perfect. Surround yourself with the right people – friends of a similar fame level – and you'll do well. The Sims understand that obscene decadence is just reward for those at the top. Mansion owners can deck out the pad with a host of new objects, including a SCUBA pool and Skydive simulator, and sport the latest fashions from the best boutiques. Kick back and enjoy the lifestyle – hey you've earned it!

MOTO GP ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY 2

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
Xbox

GENRE:
Racing

PLAYERS:
1-4 Players

AVAILABLE:
May 30

WEBSITE:
www.thq.com



Over the years many Motorbike games have come and gone, the merging of the two concepts not being all that successful. Now, things seem to be looking up for those of you hungry for two-wheel racing action so we were eager to get a hold of this "work in progress" demo of Moto GP: Ultimate Racing Technology 2.

It's worth mentioning at this point that this title is not related in any way to the Moto GP releases for PlayStation 2. Moto GP: URT2 was developed purposely for the Xbox and as a result, the game is exceedingly good looking. Textured tracks, picturesque lighting, weather effects, it all honks along (at 60 frames per second) without a hitch, even with a full field of bikes roaring onscreen.

Not just a pretty face Moto GP: URT2 offers solid and accurate handling. This game features highly responsive control so you can't go hog wild on the thumb sticks. Taking calculated risks will win you races.

Pitting your skills against a 20 strong field, you have a number of views to choose from, including a few that really don't seem to have much of a purpose. The AI riders that you're up against aren't your usual faultless opponents. They make mistakes, adjusting their tactics to how you ride - they even fall off occasionally.

Riding a bike is not simple, but it's not rocket science either. After a few



This demo offered 17 tracks, all but two were locked. Le Mans with its medium-long straights and subtle inclines was great to race on and there are a number of other famous circuits from all around the world

laps, you do get a good sense of the best lines and after a few spills you soon learn what you can get away with.

As for the riders, you'll see familiar faces as Moto GP: URT2 offers real Moto GP stars that come with their official team and bike. If that's not going to do it for you there is also a pair of customisable riders that are essentially bare-boned. From the bike to the outfit you can design everything from the ground up, so if you feel more at home in hot pink leather with matching motorbike, that's achievable and we don't judge.

The only frustration with this game was the sound. When you're racing,

you're expecting to feel/hear the raw power of a 500cc engine; however it sounds more like the "Flight of the Bumble Bee."

Multiplayer choices include everything from dual and quad split screen, system link and some promising Xbox Live options that will obviously become relevant here in due course.

There's also a stunt mode that we didn't get to explore but we still loved MotoGP: URT 2 because it represents such a huge advance in the two-wheel racing genre.

So when you're champion be sure to cruise your victory lap popping a wheelie. You know you want to!



TERROR UNLEASHED!

YOU WILL FREEZE WITH FEAR!



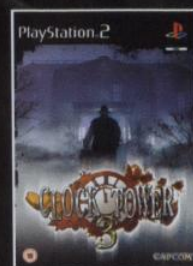
Resident Evil: Dead Aim

Search and pursuit team agent, Bruce MacGivern spear heading a shady anti-Umbrella organization's attempt to infiltrate and investigate a gigantic sea-cruiser as it makes its way across the Atlantic. Bruce is a brand new character to the Resident Evil series and along with his mysterious female partner must battle against the hordes of relentless zombies that confront them for the first time.



Clock Tower 3

Can Alyssa survive the horror before the clock strikes midnight? Yesterday she was just a normal schoolgirl: happy, cheerful and without a care in the world. Today that will all change when she discovers the truth about her family, cursed by the Servants of Evil for generations. Today is the day that Alyssa will fight back.



CAPCOM

COMING IN JUNE!

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PlayStation 2

TAO FENG: THE FIST OF THE LOTUS

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
Xbox

GENRE:
3D Fighting

PLAYERS:
1-2 Players

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.xbox.com/taofeng



Over the past few years, 3D fighting games have made a minor comeback. What made them so appealing originally was the fact that they translated well from coin-op to console.

Tao Feng: The Fist of the Lotus was designed exclusively for the Xbox by renowned game designer and Mortal Kombat Co-creator, John Tobias. In terms of setting his title apart from others, there is a discreetly slower pace to this game that allows you to take some time off from the finger cramping action you're used to. There's more time to admire the great character rendering and the smooth, fluid motion.

Set in a country called New China (geographically located in the U.S. oddly enough) Tao Feng: The Fist of the Lotus pits two warring factions (12 fighters in total) against each other. Good and Evil known as Pale Lotus and Black Mantis respectively. After centuries of rivalry they've both come to duke it out, arena style. Visibly some effort has gone into character design with numerous standouts; the creepy Wulong Goth, the hulk-like Exile and the astonishingly fit Jade Dragon are all instant pin-up material.

About the combat action in this game, we've made mention of it's slightly slower pace as compared to the other 3D fighters, what this means as far as your gaming pleasure is, that you really have to master your



For those that block too much this game will soon cure you of that. The more you defend the less power you have for attacks and subsequent defences. In fact, block too many attacks and the respective limb will break. Fun huh?



combos and style in order to come out on top. Any glory you've stolen in the past by mashing will fade and performing the finger's equivalent of a river dance on the buttons won't get you far.

For those that block too much this game will soon cure you of that. The more you defend the less power you have for attacks and subsequent defences. In fact, block too many attacks and the respective limb will break. Fun huh?

All the regular modes are catered to including Versus, Quest, Survival, Team Battle and Tournament. We know you want to just jump right in and fight, but take our advice and go through the training. You'll thank us later.

Each character has over 100 unique attacks, throws and fighting moves. Players can get in touch with their inner Chi to either heal themselves or let loose a brutal attack.

This is a highly significant addition to the arena fighting genre. With its undemanding control system and uncompromising good looks, Tao Feng: The Fist of the Lotus will fill the void for fight fans waiting for Soul Calibre 2.



Real-time damage is nothing new in a 3D fighter but Tao Feng takes this kind of detail a step further – cuts, scrapes and bruises begin to appear during each bout, plus clothing gets tattered and strategically torn. Oooooerrrr!

DEF JAM VENDETTA

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PS2\Xbox

GENRE:
3D Fighting

PLAYERS:
1-4 Players

AVAILABLE:
June 19

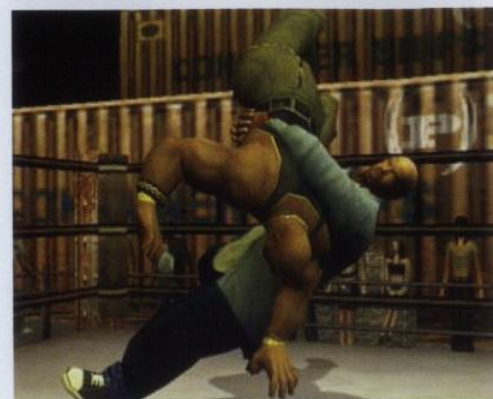
WEBSITE:
www.easportsbig.com/games/defjamvendetta



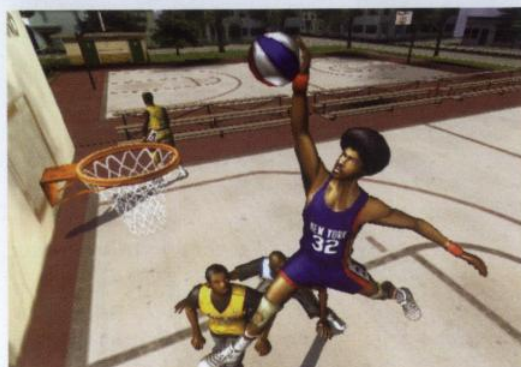
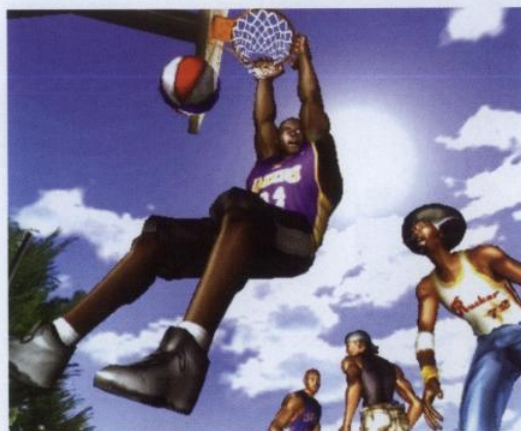
A far cry from the pomp and ceremony traditionally associated with Pro Wrestling and its associated game titles, Def Jam Vendetta combines a gritty story of revenge on the streets with the most respected label in hip hop to bring you something else you don't get with the big men in bikinis – great fight action.

Keeping the players' interest for fight after fight is the mark of success for titles in this genre, and provided the kick-ass beats and gorgeous girlfriends don't put you off Def Jam Vendetta will keep pulling you back for one more shot. Control is smooth and execution of the wide variety of moves predictable and assured. Keeping this manageable leaves the wrestler free to concentrate on tactical manoeuvring, counter moves and laying some hurts on the opponent. The quality of the wrestling engine comes as no surprise, with long time wrestling title developers AKI doing the business yet again. Fans familiar with previous efforts WCW vs. NWO Revenge and WWF No Mercy will recognise the control system and other familiar elements, but should be impressed with the improved speed and finesse in this title. This is the best wrestling engine on the market, providing one of the best 2 player fighting contests in any genre, with matches between skilled opponents reaching epic proportions.

Backing all this up is an engaging plot and a cast of cool characters. Add in the hip hop theme for some street appeal and lay on the visuals and you have a winner. Character models look great, as do the environments, and the hip hop isn't just an afterthought. End of level bosses are uncannily accurate renditions of Def Jam Artists, and the fight scenes are ripped straight from their lyrics. Fresh concept, sweet execution, another winner from EA Big.



The AI gives a good fight, and the momentum meter allows for exciting comebacks. Signature and special finishing moves seal the deal



Larger than life new and old school stars, all new signature dunks, NBA Street Vol 2 is to basketball what SSX is to snowboarding. Better bring your A-game kid!

NBA STREET VOL.2

The original NBA Street was a triumph for EA Big, the extreme division of EA Sports, who had already scored an enormous hit with SSX the previous year. With its loose approach to laws, exaggerated air and monstrous dunks, NBA Street quickly became the best arcade-style, pick-up-and-play basketball game around, even managing to steal some of the thunder from EA Sport's core NBA Live franchise.

A year and a half later, NBA Street Vol. 2 is finally here. Cel shaded and revamped but fans of the first instalment certainly won't be disappointed. Now you and your crew can show off your mad ballin' skillz in one of twelve laid back street-court settings.

You have a gang of the old skool legends of the game to choose from like, Julius "Dr. J" Irving, Larry Bird and newer blood like Kobe Bryant, Allan Iverson, just to name a few. If the "playa" in you so wanted, you have the option to play as a team of Michael Jordan's. But that's hardly fair now is it? If you want to keep the street-cred feel you can use the "create a baller" mode that giving you a dizzying array of options.

The dunks available to you will give you the chance to flaunt your mad skillz, but they're not unstoppable. The revolutionary turbo block launches your player into the air, making defence as much a highlight as offence.

The rebounding is the game's biggest hook, plus the wacky dribble moves. You can even pass with the right analog stick and alley-oop yourself by calling for the ball from the computer player mid-flight.

As with every EA Big title, there's a phat soundtrack that includes tunes from the plaster-wearing Nelly, Missy Elliott, Jay-Z and veteran MC Lyte. So, go to the mall get your new sneakers and bring it.

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PS2\Xbox

GENRE:
Sports

PLAYERS:
1-4 Players

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.easportsbig.com/games/nbastreet2



METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PS2\Xbox

GENRE:
3D Action

PLAYERS:
1 Player

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.konami.com/substance



Being the nice, new-age developers that they are, Konami addressed the complaints people had with Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty and have released what they believe to be Metal Gear Solid 2 with, ah, Substance. Along with a complete copy of Sons of Liberty come several added features which substantially bulk up the overall gameplay offered by just the game alone.

The main added extra is the addition of VR missions. Literally hundreds of these extra missions are here for the taking, and are broken down into four different modes. Completing a number of VR missions unlocks different costumes, depending on which character you play (more on that later), including a pretty nifty ninja costume which just looks super. Each new costume comes with extra VR missions to be completed.

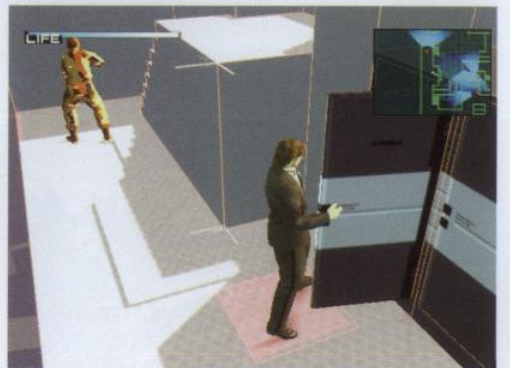
Adding to the VR missions in Substance are over a hundred "Alternate" levels, which are similar in content to the VR levels but set in locations from both the Tanker and Big Shell missions. These levels are designed to give you a more game-play oriented perspective of Sons of Liberty.

A nice added extra is that you can now play the Tanker and the Big Shell levels separately if you wish, allowing you to play the game in smaller chunks.

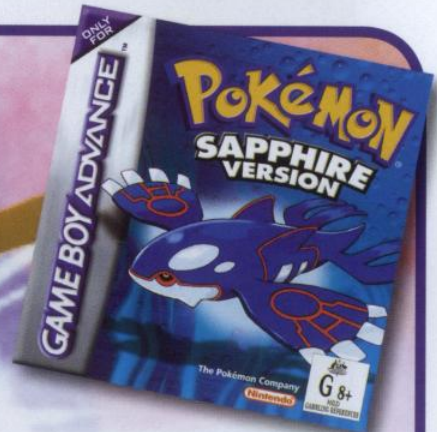
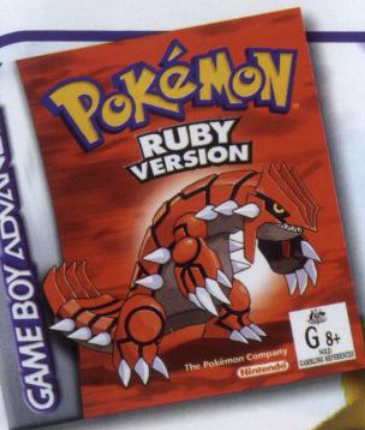
Also included are five "Snake Tales". Yep, that's right, Snake is back and the tales are played out using the same environments but with a whole new story.

On top of all these additions are a handful of smaller features, including a Boss Survival mode and a pretty odd skateboarding game which sees Snake or Raiden busting out their board riding skills Tony Hawk style.

Despite using the same graphics engine as its predecessor, Metal Gear Solid 2:Substance is still a great looking game and with the added goods here this is a decent enough upgrade to tide you over until Metal Gear Solid 3 comes out sometime next year.



highly evolved!



These new Pokémon adventures on Game Boy Advance & Game Boy Advance SP are the biggest Pokémon experiences so far!

Features brand new settings, boy & girl trainers and never before two- Pokémon vs. two-Pokémon battles!

135 New Pokémon have been added bringing the total known Pokémon to 386!

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PC

GENRE:
Strategy Sim

PLAYERS:
Online

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.eidosinteractive.co.uk



In this fourth instalment of the top selling footy manager series of all time, Eidos have added a great degree of depth and detail.

The almost intimidating instruction manual resembles a small paperback novel. The sheer number of options offered could easily sweep away trainee managers.

The recruiting of Ray Houghton (former Republic of Ireland and Liverpool star) to offer advice during the development of the game meant leaving literally no stone unturned.

There are 39 national leagues, with over 200,000 players and back up staff. In Championship Manager 4, you'll not only be dealing with prima Donna players, but you'll have staff to supervise as well.

The available leagues are incredibly diverse. You can overthrow Sir Alex at Old Trafford and take over a glamour club or if you prefer, you can manage a squad of unknowns from the Portuguese Second Division B.

Players can now make more informed tactical decisions during a game by viewing the match using the brilliant new real-time 2D engine. Watch the traditional highlights packages or if you've got a bit of time on your hands, you can watch a full ninety minute match!

There's just too much for one man to take care of so you can appoint an assistant manager who will carry some of the burden. He assists with team selection, recommends players and offers advice on scouting and contract negotiations.

With unmatched depth, endless longevity, Championship Manager 4 won't disappoint fans but a word of warning, the highly addictive nature of the game can leave your friends and family sending out a search party for you!



Each player is assessed on various attributes and then marked on everything from agility to work rate. A good coach always keeps a close eye on his player's



Unforgettable crashes, great cars, driving at dangerous speeds through built-up areas; Burnout 2: Point of Impact is high velocity cool

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

Coming soon to a console near you, Burnout 2: Point of Impact will now provide Xbox fuel heads with a refreshing new racer.

For this newest version they've pumped up the polygon count; now reflections off the vehicles appear more realistic and all at a smooth 60 frames per second. Enhanced weather effects mean you'll need to adjust to driving in rain and fog.

There are six new tracks added for your driving pleasure, including, Los Angeles, The Rocky Mountains, New Mexico and even a busy international airport. As if added locations weren't enough, there are over a dozen brand spankin' new cars (not counting the unlockable hidden vehicles like police cars and retro hot rods). In relation to the cars, the new damage system is in place. What that means is if you crash, parts of your car crumble and/or fall off.

And speaking of crashing, the appropriately named Burnout 2: Point of Impact features road smashes that are nothing short of spectacular. The multiple-angle, slow motion replays are frequently hilarious and there's even a mini-game where the aim is actually to cause a serious traffic pile up. Crunch!

The standard game modes present you with familiar territory (single race, time trial etc.) but added to those is a new Pursuit mode. There's certainly more of a slant towards the "street racing" feel rather than just satisfying a need to weave through traffic. You can customise your car with the requisite spoilers, paint schemes and all that comes with that territory.

Another significant feature added for the Xbox version is the custom soundtrack system that allows you to play the music you have stored on your hard drive. There are some solid multi-player options as well using split screen or system link.

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
Xbox

GENRE:
Racing

PLAYERS:
1-2 Players

AVAILABLE:
May 30

WEBSITE:
www.sccslm.com/games/burnout2



GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PC

GENRE:
Action/Driving

PLAYERS:
1 Player

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.rockstargames.com



For this PC version there are numerous changes but the retro charm and hard-nosed attitude remains.

GTA Vice City borrows from almost every slice of retro culture, especially music and film – if you can picture Molly Ringwald in a speedboat firing a bazooka at Blondie, you're about halfway there.

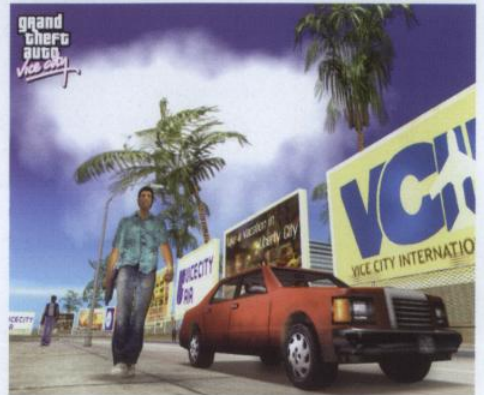
The immense environment with its speedboats, opulent mansions and a gang-infested Cuban sector cries out Miami. The city itself is huge, over three times the size of GTA III's Liberty City.

If you're not familiar with the story where have you been? You play as Tommy Vercetti (voiced by the hopelessly typecast Ray Liotta), recently released from the slammer, a penniless hood in need of a score. Vice City here we come.

So what's different? Not the story and the missions so much as Rockstar taking advantage of the new hardware and tech-type advancements. Graphically, that means this release has kicked it up another notch. The new engine offers richer colours and pristine lighting effects. Also, it has greater draw distancing and a new replay feature that captures 30 seconds of action. So, you think you look cool? Watch it again and again; invite family and friends as you recapture your moment of glory.

There was much talk about the soundtrack for this game which is filled to the brim with 80's hits. You'll go through your missions listening to everything from REO Speedwagon to Twisted Sister. If you are trying to forget the 80's you can create your own radio station using your own MP3s. There's even a new feature that lets you create your own character skins.

GTA Vice City is compatible with all major (UN Sanctioned) peripherals, including joysticks, gamepads and wheels.



If Hollywood were to create a game, this would be it. Complete with voice-over performances from the likes of Burt Reynolds, Tom Sizemore and Dennis Hopper

SHINOBI

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PS2

GENRE:
3D Action

PLAYERS:
1 Player

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.sega.com



Ninjas wanted - sword skills a must, quitters need not apply! It's been a while here at Gamefreaks since we played something that was so straight out difficult, yet so satisfying. If you're up for an old school challenge to the reflexes and to the mind, few games are as rewarding to master as this Sega tale of betrayal and vengeance.

As mentioned in last month's preview, this game has all the elements of a classic: responsive controls, fast action and gore galore in an unfolding story of epic proportions. The way these elements work together provide an insight into the level of understanding bought to this game by its developers. Just getting through the deceptively stark level design requires mastery of the controller and a cool head – one twitch too many spells death – and in combat the seemingly simple moves chain together into a brutal set of combos and specials.

Style is built into the bones of this game, and experienced players will realise that mashing through won't cut it, but timing and momentum mean everything. Feedback from controls is instant, and the visual cues such as Hotsuma's flowing scarf are more than eye candy, they are essential tools for assessing body position, attack attitude and recovery strategies. Mastering 'Tate' or group kills powers-up Hotsuma's cursed and greedy sword Aku-jiki. Key to this is ghosting past your enemies defenses, timing your attacks to coincide with theirs, and kills with the minimum number of sword strokes.

Once each level has been disposed of confidence and determination will be required to beat the increasingly bizarre and powerful level bosses. Patience pays off, and once you adjust to the pace of the game the mayhem takes on a strange beauty as hero and sword dance with death. Economy and grace are the attributes of a ninja, and the hallmark of a great game!



GOLDEN SUN THE LOST AGE

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
GBA

GENRE:
RPG

PLAYERS:
1-4 Players

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.nintendo.com



The original Golden Sun was one of the more admired GBA titles so this sequel has a lot to live up to.

The subtle improvements in Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age are not immediately obvious. The graphics have been upgraded somewhat, not that the first Golden Sun was bad to look at but the noticeably less pixilated animation obviously doesn't hurt.

Unlike the previous game where you're left to amble wearily on foot, this new version gives you a boat! This adds another dimension of freedom to the gameplay that didn't exist before (and your character will thank you for not wearing his shoes out).

During the frequent battles, four characters can fight at once though you have the option to interchange fighters or characters, sequentially.

As with most RPG's Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age is story driven (Yep, that means lots of reading!) and you can expect a whopping 50 hours worth of gameplay, which makes Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age considerably longer than its predecessor.

Some of the puzzles are complex at times. For this players can use their "Psynergy" (such as douse or whirlwind) to help solve them.

In this game you can create powerful "combo summons" by utilising the Djinn. These Djinn are collectible so the more you round up the more powerful your summon will be.

Players can import their old data from the first Golden Sun into this new release and it's rumoured that doing so gives you access to hidden levels.

All things considered Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age will be a welcome addition to the GBA line-up with its engaging nature and epic role playing scale.



Sweet graphics and impressive summon effects surpass anything seen before on a handheld game system. New special abilities offer even more ways to battle and to solve tricky puzzles

VIETCONG

Get out your jungle camouflage and take on the roll of a Special Forces Unit leader. Dropped into the middle of the dense Vietnamese jungle you have to infiltrate the Vietcong forces to attempt turning the war in your favour. For those of you that actually thought this war was unfairly won by the Vietnamese, here is your chance to give the U.S. Troops a fighting chance.

The rich visual imagery of the game helps transport you and engage you mentally for a good fire fight. Vietcong offers 20 missions that are reasonably diverse. You get to try your hand at base defence and attacks, helicopter gun-operation missions and clearing endless VC tunnel networks.

There is a selection of 20 era-authentic weapons at your disposal, create mayhem as you see fit. But the enemy also has their cache of weapons that will create a very authentic run and dodge situation during missions.

Playing this game online will give you another aspect to try; one team being able to assume the role of VC. This of course comes with the requisite smack-talking and posturing.

Before you start having Vietnam War flashbacks of your own, this isn't really a simulation game. Vietcong is an action-shooter that will leave the thrill-hungry satisfied and blood-thirsty quenched.

Few publishers would have the stomach to produce a game set during the Vietnam conflict. After all, it was probably one the most ill-conceived US military interventions of last century. But then the ever-daring Take 2 Interactive is not exactly known for shying away from controversy.

As a combat shooter, Vietcong is not going to knock Battlefield 1942 off its lofty perch but importantly it delivers where it counts.



Welcome to the jungle baby! Vietcong features 20 missions, authentic weaponry and more way out 60s tunes than a China Beach soundtrack

DETAILS

PLATFORM:
PC

GENRE:
FPS

PLAYERS:
Online

AVAILABLE:
Out Now

WEBSITE:
www.vietcong-game.com



OUT THIS MONTH...



BLITZKIEG

PC ■ ROADSHOW

This RTS is even more historically precise than the popular Sudden Strike series. It features more than 150 pieces of WWII hardware, over 40 infantry units, a gorgeous 3D engine and multiplayer options with adroit AI opponents. This is everything a WWII fan could want.



MIDNIGHT CLUB II

PS2/XBOX ■ TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

Take 2 Interactive take us back to the shadowy world of illegal street racing. This high velocity sequel has come on in leaps and bounds - break-neck speeds, no rules, spectacular visuals (especially on the Xbox version) and motorbikes. Last one down the servo's a tool!



LEGENDS OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER

GAMECUBE ■ NINTENDO

This new Zelda title exudes beauty, originality, brains and charm. It has universal appeal, even if you generally dislike RPGs, you'll probably still fancy exploring this adventure. But be aware, this charismatic title is exclusive to Nintendo's Gamecube.



V-RALLY 3

PS2/XBOX ■ INFOGRAMES

V-Rally 3 is new to Xbox this month. Developers Eden Studios redesigned the game to give V-Rally 3 its own unique identity on the Xbox. As well as the graphics, handling dynamics have been enhanced and the tracks have been widened for a superior driving and racing experience.



G1 JOCKEY 3

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ ACCLAIM

Fancy yourself as a bit of a horseman? Now you can explore your equestrian potential on the back of the next cup winner. Detailed graphics, unique horse characteristics, new whip techniques! It's all here race fans as well as an exciting 2-player split screen option. Giddy up!



MOTO GP3

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCEI

This officially licensed series continues to evolve. This new game boasts 15 famous world circuits and 20 new fantasy courses. There's a quad split screen feature for up to four players, new views, updated teams, bikes and riders and 100 unique challenges to unlock.



COLIN McCRAE RALLY 3.0

PS2/PC/XBOX ■ CODEMASTERS

The Colin McRae Rally series has essentially evolved into a Ford Focus simulator where you can lay as Colin McRae himself. It includes all teams, cars, tracks and all the beautiful damage you can inflict - a big leap forward in terms of playability, detail, visuals and handling.



YAGER

XBOX ■ THQ

Futuristic spacecraft, a multifaceted, witty plot - even the voice acting is textbook. This title places you as a hotshot rookie pilot but this is no space shooter. While the bulk of the gameplay sees you engaged in air-combat, you'll be flying over picturesque landscapes or ocean.



WAR OF THE MONSTERS

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCEI

50s horror has arrived on the arena combat scene from the developers of Twisted Metal Black. Multiplayer can be tough (especially against a human opponent who can work the moves) but the polish and playability is evident - go the Monsters!



KUNG FU CHAOS

XBOX ■ MICROSOFT

With its martial arts matinee brawling, 70s trash talking and a soundtrack that includes Bus Stop's "Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting" this is multiplayer mini-gaming armed with a sense of humour. A fun and charming 3D beat 'em up.



TROPICO 2 PIRATES COVE

PC ■ TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

Ahoy mates! What a fine sequel she be! Tropic 2: Pirates Cove is an imaginative strategy title that lets you lead your very own band of cutthroat sailors, causing havoc on the high seas, looting, pillaging and doing all that other cool pirate stuff.



NBA 2K3

PS2/XBOX ■ INFOGRAMES

Sega has thrown down the gauntlet with a trio of cross-platform sports titles. NBA 2K3 features high-speed gameplay, simple controls and sweet visuals but its doubtful that it matches the playability and excitement of EA Sports' NBA Live series.

COMPETITIONS



NBA 2K3

We have 5 (Xbox copies) of Sega's NBA 2K3 to give away. Each with a sweet NBA 2K3 cap! Answer the following to be in the draw to win.

"Which of the following is not a team in the NBA?"

- a) "LA Lakers "
- b) "Seattle Supersonics"
- c) "North Dakota Beavers"



LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

Nintendo have kindly provided 2 copies of The Legend of Zelda The Wind Waker to win. Just complete the following sentence to be in the draw.

"Shigeru Miyamoto is a ____?"

- a) "champion Sumo Wrestler"
- b) "former Emperor of Japan"
- c) "legendary game designer"



TAO FENG THE FIST OF THE LOTUS

Microsoft has given us 3 copies of thier new 3D fighter for 3 lucky Xbox owners to win! Simply answer the following to go in the draw to win!

"Which of the following disciplines is not a martial art?"

- a) "Ninjitsu"
- b) "Origami"
- c) "Kendo"



V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER

To celebrate the release of V8 Supercars for the PC, we have 2 copies to give away. Answer the following question to be in the draw to win.

"Which country would you be in if you were racing at Bathurst?"

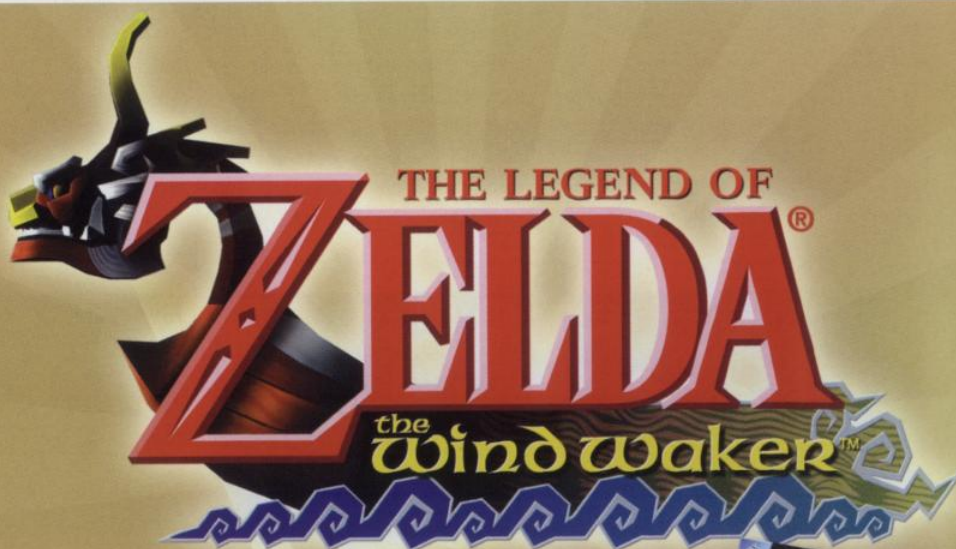
- a) "Australia"
- b) "North Korea"
- c) "Syria"

HOW TO ENTER

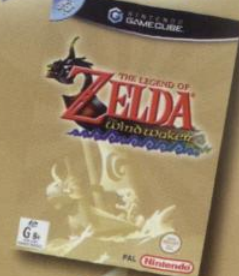
Write your name, phone number and contact details on the back of the envelope, list the prize you're after and you will need to include the correct answer. All correct entries immediately go into the draw to win. All winners for this month's competitions will be notified June 6, 2003.

Send to: Gamefreaks Competition, PO Box 68211, Newton, Auckland or email: competitions@tenthplanet.co.nz (Maximum 3 entries if you're entering by email)

Nintendo



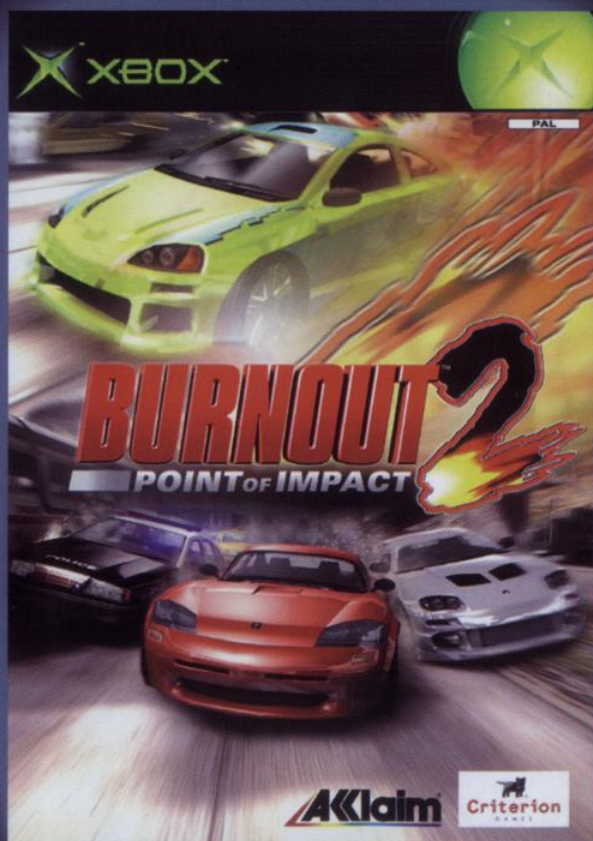
Legend has it that whenever evil has appeared, a hero named Link has risen to defeat it. That legend continues on the surface of a great and mysterious sea as Link sets off on his most epic and awe-inspired adventure yet. Aided by a magical conductor's baton called the Wind Waker, he will face unimaginable monsters, explore puzzling dungeons, and meet a cast of unforgettable characters as he searches for his kidnapped sister!



**NINTENDO
GAMECUBE™**

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**Purchase
Burnout 2 on XBOX
and go in the draw to
win a Limited Edition Fast
& The Furious™ car audio pack
worth \$2,500**



Pack includes:
 Limited Edition Sub & Sub Box
 Limited Edition Amp &
 Pioneer Headunit (DEHP9450)



www.universalstudios.com / www.thefastandthefurious.com

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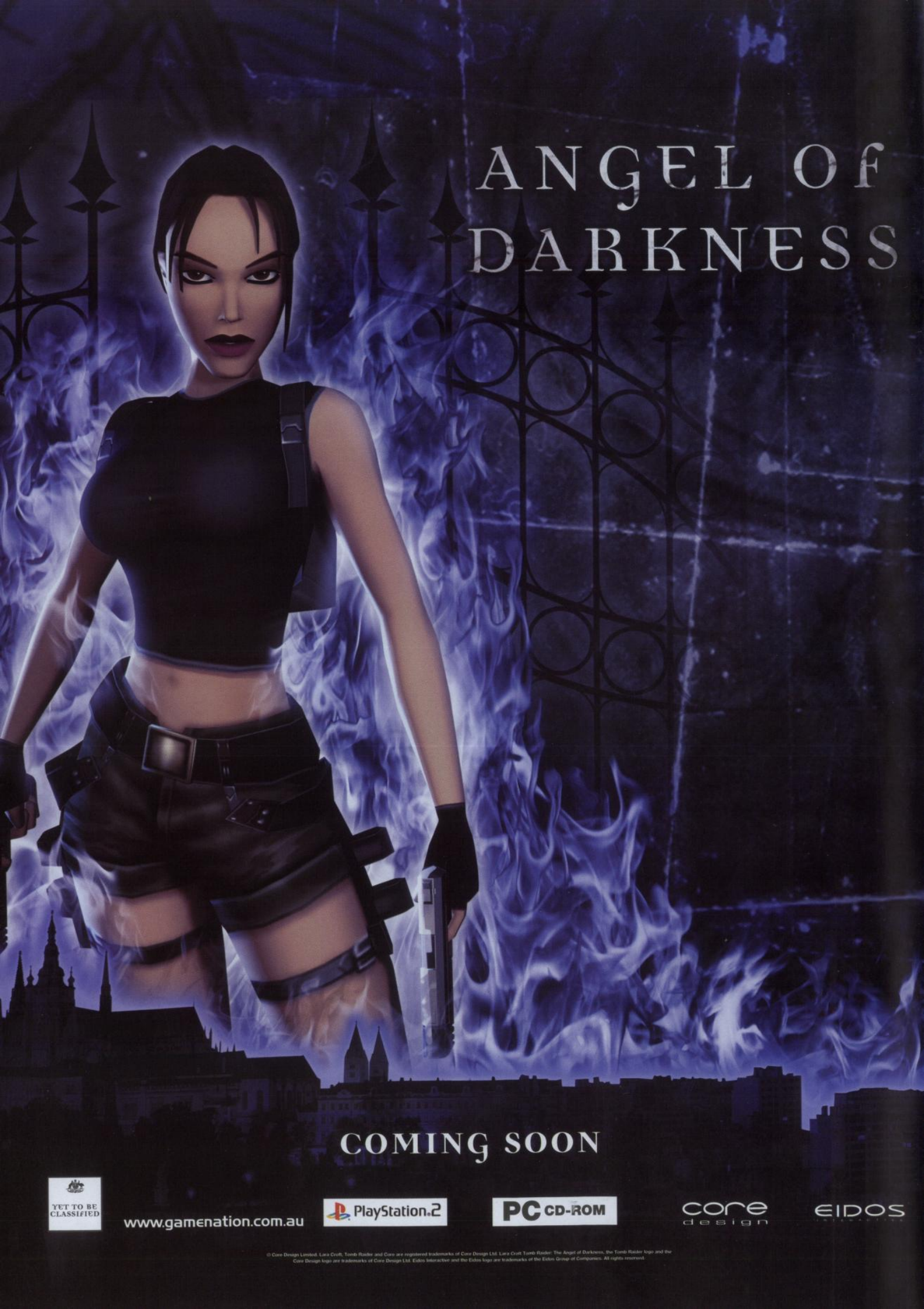
The driving sequences in the motion picture The Fast and The Furious 2 were filmed with professional stunt drivers, under carefully-controlled conditions, for entertainment purposes only. No attempt should be made to duplicate any of the racing activities or sequences depicted therein. Universal neither condones nor endorses the use of this or any related product in any manner whatsoever other than in strict accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and speed limits.

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Please note:
 Conditions do apply. See in pack for details.
 Two prize packs to be won.
 Competition closes 31 July 2003.



UNIVERSAL STUDIOS
 CONSUMER PRODUCTS GROUP
www.universalstudios.com
www.thefastandthefurious.com

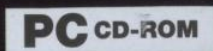
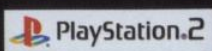


ANGEL OF DARKNESS

COMING SOON



www.gamenation.com.au



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design

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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